The Builder.

No. CCXLII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1847.

READERS of THE BUILDER are tolerably well aware by this time, that the duties of its conductor are not those of the study alone.—Practically engaged in the matters whereof our journal chiefly treats, we are led into all parts of the country, and so are enabled to see, often hurriedly it is true, but with our own eyes, the progress of architecture and building, the condition of our ancient structures, the views entertained in respect of art, and the state of sanatory knowledge, far away from the metropolis. The communication to our readers of the facts and views thus gathered, with such remarks as their observance may induce, cannot, we venture to think, be otherwise than useful. The kindly re-echo of our papers of this description by the provincial press all over the country, justifies our opinion, and leads us to pursue the same course as often as opportunities occur.

The change which is being effected in the character of inhabitants of country towns and villages by railways, is very observable: their thoughts and habits have been changed, and in the next generation will produce important results. In one of the railway "Supplements," given by us at the end of 1845, to provide space for the numerous advertisements of that extraordinary year (a theme for future writers), we ventured a remark that it had often occurred to us, when looking along the extended lines of a railway from a quiet bridge in a district far removed from towns, that the mere presence of these rails must have considerable effect on the character and life of the neighbouring population. Few appreciate sufficiently the effect of external circumstances on our thoughts, feelings, and habits. The influence exerted by works of fine art on the beholder is partially admitted; but in reality is much greater than is believed. And we expressed a conviction, that the constant observance of these Iron lines,—straight, parallel, and precise,—must induce greater precision of thought and regularity of conduct. As we then observed, the tendency of the whole railway system is the same, and we have no hesitation in now saying, that this effect has been produced already to a great extent. The exactness, *usually*, observed in the arrival and departure of the trains; the calculation of the time by minutes, not half-hours—has conduced to punctuality, and led to a consideration of the worth of time.

We can ourselves see the change, and augur from it much advantage. England is becoming one London. To give the intelligence and activity of the metropolis to the provinces, and, by sanatorial knowledge, the healthfulness of the country to towns, is an achievement which if effected will nobly distinguish our age.

A return of the number of newspapers and periodicals purchased at the various railway stations during a stated period would be curious. Every railway carriage becomes a reading-room, and a circulating library too. We have entered a carriage at the Paddington station, (round which, by the way, a very town is rising, churches, houses, and hotels, beyond computation,) and in it there are four of the morning papers. Our destination is Bristol, and before we reach Swindon, the papers have been exchanged, and the whole have been seen by each passenger.

Swindon, it may be observed, is increasing rapidly, and would afford an interesting object for study. Here one might trace the growth of municipal institutions, even of national government. In all the erections there the pointed style of architecture is adopted; if persisted in, which it is to be hoped may be case, the result will be very striking. But our business is in *Bristol*,—so, on.

The improvements proposed for this important city appear to be standing still, but, we understand, are not abandoned. The present drainage is exceedingly defective, dangerously so,—the annual loss of life and property in consequence of this must be very great, though few, perhaps, attribute it to the right cause. The supply of water, an important point, will soon be greatly increased. The Bristol water-company are making progress with their works. Last week, a bridge was completed by Messrs. Isaac and Webster, the contractors, over the New Cut, for the support of pipes to convey water from the springs near the Mendip Hills. We did not see it, but, as we are informed, it is of Memel timber, framed with vertical and diagonal braces, and secured with iron bolts and straps. The span is 110 feet; it is 12 feet wide at the springing, and 6 feet wide at the crown of the arch. A tunnel from Barrow, more than 400 yards long, has been formed, also a reservoir at Bedminster, and about twenty miles of pipes have been laid down. Baths and washhouses are talked of as fitting accompaniments of the new current of cleanliness, comfort, and health, about to be let through the city.

The first contract for the *restoration of St. Mary Redcliffe Church* is now completed. The ground has been lowered several feet all round the church, so as to expose the whole extent of the faced work of the walls, as originally seen, a complete system of drainage has been formed, and the ground next the south side of the church, where much water falls from the higher land adjoining, has been paved. The oak roofs of the chancel and aisles have been renewed, and now leaded on a layer of asphalted felt and oak boarding. The east end, with its curious "imbricated" window, and one severy of the chancel on each side of it, have been restored stone by stone, including parapets, flying buttresses, and enriched pinnacles, which had long ago been destroyed, and will enable the good citizens to judge of the appearance the building would present if made perfect. Finished, it would indeed justify Chatterton's verse, wherein he exclaims,—

> "What wondrous monumente! What pyle ys thys?
> That bynds in wonders chayne entendemente!
> That doth aloof the ayrie skyen kiss,
> And seemeth mountaynes joyned by cemente,
> From Godde his greete and wondrous storehouse sente."

The state of the rest of the church is distressing. What has been done, although at the cost of much money, makes but a small show, so much yet remains undone, and every effort should be made to carry on the works further.

Withinside, the brickwork which blocked up the archway between the chancel and the lady chapel has been removed, and a beautiful stone screen, in that position, much mutilated, is exposed to view. This is in seven divisions, the centre one of which contains a doorway leading into the lady chapel. The upper part of all the divisions is open, and divided into three lights each by mullions; buttresses and pinnacles separate the divisions, and a horizontal strawberry-leaf cornice surmounts the whole. The cill of the door is level with the floor of the chancel, the marble steps whereon the communion-table recently stood blocked up half the height of the doorway. From the arrangement of this screen, it would almost seem as if the high altar had stood in what is now called the lady chapel, at the eastern extremity of which there is a raised platform and descending steps.

Is there no modern Canynge in Bristol, to assist the committee in restoring this noble pile in its fulness and beauty?

At the Bristol *Exchange*, an exceedingly interesting building by Wood, of Bath, parties were about to paint the stone walls of the quadrangle. Some members of the town council very properly objecting to such a course, took advice, and finding that the walls could without difficulty be faced and brought to their original appearance, will probably succeed in preventing the contemplated smearing. In this quadrangle, are to be found some exceedingly picturesque effects, which should be studied by such of our young architectural friends as may visit the city. The rest of the building is much in need of repair and restoration. If the niches in the walls of the quadrangle were filled with statues of the Bristol notables in free stone, forming as it were a local Walhalla, and polychromy judiciously applied in the ceilings and enriched frieze which runs round the whole, this building would become an adornment of the city, and an object of no small attraction.

The first stone of the Exchange was laid on the 10th of March, 1740, and the structure was opened with great pomp on the 21st of September, 1743. The quadrangle, including the peristyle (of the Corinthian order), is 90 feet in length and 80 feet in width. The porticoes (regarding each side as such) are *octastyle*, but the extreme columns are brought together to strengthen the corners. This, as Wood remarks, in the description of the building which he published, "increases the other intercolumniations, and makes them of that sort which Vitruvius calls *araeostylos*, that is, where the aperture is two diameters high, and sometimes less."

And speaking of the adornment of the city and its antiquities, it is to be regretted that the ancient cross should have been taken away. If we understand rightly, it was sold to Sir Richard Hoare for 100*l.*, and is now in Wiltshire, rapidly decaying. The town-council should endeavour to obtain its restitution, in which it would doubtless be aided by the local *Architectural* Society.

This society is pursuing its course, in some respects, very successfully. The Archdeacon of Bristol, who was in the chair at the last meeting, when referring with satisfaction to the advance in the principles of ecclesiastical arrangement, as exhibited by the Incorporated and Diocesan Church Building Associations, expressed a hope that these Church Building Associations would turn their attention to the subject of restoration of *old churches*, and make grants towards that object. He also took occasion to notice the difference between most of the churches now or lately erected, and those built before the formation of such societies as that of which we are speaking, and thought that the cheering aspect of them made it the interest of all officers of the Church to join such societies, and gave encouragement to those engaged in them to persevere in their good work.

The difference between old and new modern

For more Information on PDF Compression and OCR visit ThePaperlessOffice.org